

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SELLING: A REVIEW.

Raheem Shefiu.

Centre For Entrepreneurship Development (CED), Yaba College of Technology, Yaba. Lagos.

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews entrepreneurship. It does not exist without the act of selling being factored into relevance. The nation's economy can only be revamped by producing and selling more of our products both locally and abroad to earn the foreign exchange needed to grow the economy. In the paper, relationship between selling and entrepreneurship, stages involved in selling and secrets of selling were highlighted. It was concluded that...for the economy of the country to quantum leap, selling must be the cornerstone of all entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurship does not exist without the act of selling being factored into relevance. The nation's economy can only be revamped by producing and selling more of our products both locally and abroad to earn the foreign exchange needed to grow the economy.

Selling involves communicating the benefits of a product or service to the prospective consumers with the intent of taking a purchase decision. It involves prospecting, pre-approach, approach, close and follow-up.

The salespeople must be conscious of what the customer likes or dislikes in them to be able to sell and consequently make profit for the organization. They must also know the secrets of increasing sales.

Buying and selling sustain entrepreneurial effort. The entrepreneurs are the catalyst of change needed to take Nigeria's economy to the next level of prosperity in the realization of the objectives of vision 2020.

KEYWORDS: market, economy, entrepreneurship, consumers, commodity, producers, nation

INTRODUCTION

Life is brought to an end without entrepreneurship. Man continues to live because his needs are met through the process of entrepreneurship. It is the sine-qua-none of our existence.

Man needs food to survive provided by an AGGLOPRENEUR. His other wants are satisfied by the MERCHANTPRENUERS, CO-PRENUERS AND SERVICEPRENUERS. These wants or needs of man are produced, sold and bought in the market.

The consumers are made happy when they have an avalanche of commodities and services to buy. People buy because of the utility to be derived from such a commodity or service arising from emotional or rational reasons of purchase.

The economy of every nation is brought about by the market activities of the consumers and the entrepreneurs (producers). These activities cannot take place without selling what the people are willing and ready to buy. An economy cannot grow without the creation of new ventures by the entrepreneurs. Truly, economies and lives perish without entrepreneurship.

The entrepreneurs scan the environment for the identification of gaps within the economy to be filled or needs to be met leading to the production of commodities and rendering of services to be bought by the consumers.

Therefore, it is the aim of this paper to show that the concept of entrepreneurship is a nullity without an understanding of a key role played by selling in making whatsoever has been produced by the entrepreneurs available to the final consumers.

What happens when the entrepreneurs produce and there are no consumers to buy?

It is no exaggeration to state that **WITHOUT SELLING, THE PROCESS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS STILLED.**

This has become a truism. Entrepreneurship is aborted or halted without selling.

The "abortion" of the process of entrepreneurship spells doom for a nation's economy. The entrepreneurs must produce. The consumers will buy what has been produced given that such a product or service possesses utility (satisfaction). When this happens, it engenders economic growth and development leading the breakage of the vicious cycle of poverty consequently the people live life in abundance.

Nigeria's economy will be in doldrums without selling its crude oil to the United States of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK), cassava pellets to the Republic of China and other agricultural products in addition to the solid minerals in the global market place.

NIGERIA EXPORTS TO THE UNITED KINGDOM INCREASES

"Nigeria's export recorded a significant growth of about 436 percent this year according to the British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Bob Dewar. He said that the rate of investment by the United Kingdom government has continued to grow in the last few years with exports increasing by 30 percent in 2008 and by 23 percent in the first five months of 2009" (Bassey, 2009)

He said that export services amounted to about £1.3 billion last year while export from Nigeria was just over £200 million, much of which went into importation of refined petroleum products. He went further to say that exports like cocoa are down by 74 percent this year despite a revival in the industry.

There are opportunities for new exports if the economy can diversify in a way that encourages entrepreneurs to have confidence in new opportunities, not least into commercial agriculture (large and small scale) and new value added products, he said.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE ENTREPRENEUR DEFINED.

Innocent Akhuemonkhan(2005) Entrepreneurship is the process through which new organizations come into existence. It is a human creative action that builds something of value from practically nothing (Innocent, 2005)

Richard Cantillon (Circa 1730): Entrepreneurship is defined as a self employment of any sort. The entrepreneurs buy at certain prices in the present and SELL at uncertain prices in the future. The entrepreneur is a bearer of uncertainty.

Frank Knight (1921): Entrepreneurs attempt to predict and act upon changes within the MARKET.

Joseph Schumpeter (1934): The entrepreneur is the innovator who implements changes within the MARKET by carrying out new combinations which include the following:

1. The introduction of a new good or quality thereof.
2. The introduction of a new method of production.
3. The opening of a NEW MARKET.
4. The conquest of a new source of supply of new materials or parts.
5. The carrying out of reorganization of any industry.

Israel Kirziner (1977): The entrepreneur recognizes acts upon MARKET opportunities.

Innocent Akhuemonkhan (2005): The entrepreneur is a person who has the ability to identify and evaluate business opportunities in the environment, he gathers resources to take advantage of the business opportunities and also initiate an appropriate action to ensure success.

He also enumerated the functions of an entrepreneur as follows:

1. He searches for and discovers new information.
2. He translates new information into new MARKETS, techniques and goods.
3. Seeks and discovers economic opportunity.

THE NITTY-GRITTY OF SELLING

Everyone lives by selling something: Life is nullity without selling. Every occupation that involves making contact with the people involves selling.

Lawyer, Accountants, Bankers, Engineers, Architects, Lecturers, Politicians, Managers and others who perform sales related activities whether or not they acknowledge it get involved in the act of selling.

Selling exists in the relationship of man with GOD. He provides (sells) your needs and you reciprocate (buy) through offerings, thanksgiving and, praise-worship. It does exist between husband and wife. A man searches for the qualities he wants in a woman, if he finds, he buys through an offer for marriage. The woman sells through her consent of love, given that the man possesses utility i.e he possesses what she likes in a man.

SELLING DEFINED:- It means the communication of the benefits of a product or service to those who need or want it, in order to elicit a purchase decision (Eniola, 2004)²

It is a subset of marketing irrespective of the organizational structure and social stratification. It brings about the creation of awareness, interest and the stimulation of a desired action about a product or service.

THE TYPES OF SELLING: These include the following;

1. **Personal Selling:** This is a variant of selling that concerns itself with a two-way flow of communication between a buyer and a seller, often a face to face encounter designed to influence a person's or group's purchase decision.
2. **Relationship Selling:-** This has to do with the process of building ties with the customers based on their needs over time.
3. **Conference Selling:-** This involves a sales person and the other company resource people meeting with the buyers to discuss problems and opportunities.
4. **Seminar Selling:-** This has to do with the company team conducting an educational programme for the customer's technical staff, describing the state of the art developments in the company.

THE CONCEPT OF EXCHANGE AS THE CORNERSTONE OF SELLING

The concept of exchange is the backbone of selling. When you sell, something of value must exchange hands between the seller and the buyer.

This means that people must give up something to receive something they would rather have.

The conditions necessary for an exchange to take place include the following:

1. There must be at least two parties (Buyers and Sellers)
2. Each party must have something the other party values.
3. Each party must be able to communicate with, the other party and deliver the goods or services sought by the other trading party.
4. Each party must be free to accept reject the other's offer.
5. Each party must want to deal with the other party.

DEPLOYMENT OF SELLING AS A POTENT TOOL OF PROFITABILITY BY AN ENTREPRENEUR

Building buyer - seller relationship is the hub of selling.

It should be noted that much of a sales person's work occurs before meeting with the customer and also continues after the sales itself.

The personal selling process consists of the following stages;

1. **Prospecting:** This is the search for and qualification of potential customers. The LEAD is the name of a person who may be a possible customer, or PROSPECT. The QUALIFIED prospect is that individual who can afford to buy the product and he is also a decision marker.
2. **Pre-Approach:** Once a sales person has identified a qualified prospect, the preparation for the sales begins with the preapproach which involves obtaining further information on the prospect.

It also involves deciding on the best method of approach knowing how the prospect prefers to be approached, what the prospect is looking for in a product or service.

3. Approach:- It involves the initial meeting between the sales person and the prospect where the objectives are to gain the prospect's attention, stimulate interest and build the foundation for the sale presentation and the basis for a working relationship. The objective of sale presentation is to convert a prospect into a customer by creating a desire for the product or service. The three major presentation formats include STIMULI RESPONSE FORMAT, FORMULA SELLING FORMAT AND THE NEED SATISFACTION FORMAT.

HANDLING OBJECTIONS DURING SALES PRESENTATION

Objections are excuses for not making a purchase commitment or decision. Techniques can be used to deal with objections in a courteous, ethical and professional manner. These techniques include the following:

- i. Acknowledge and Convert the Objection: This technique involves using the objection as a reason for buying e.g. A prospect says the price is high. Yes, the price is high because of its finest quality.
 - ii. Postpone: This technique is used when the objection will be dealt with later in the presentation.
 - iii. Agree and Neutralise: The sales person agrees with the objection, then shows that it is unimportant.
 - iv. Accept the Objection: When the objection is valid, let the prospect express such views, probe for the reason behind it and attempt to stimulate further discussion on the objection.
 - v. Denial:- When a prospect's objection is based on misinformation and it is clearly untrue. It is wise to meet the objection head on with a firm denial.
 - vi. Ignore the Objection: This technique is used when it appears that the objection is a stalling mechanism or is not important to the prospect of Technology.
4. Close: This stage involves obtaining a purchase commitment from the prospect. This stage is the most important and the most difficult because the salesperson must determine when the prospect is ready to buy.
 5. Follow-Up: The selling process does not end with the closing of a sale. Professional selling requires CUSTOMER FOLLOW- UP. It is equated with courtship and marriage. The sale consummates the courtship then the marriage begins.

It includes making sure that the customer's purchase has been properly delivered, installed and the difficulties experienced with the use of the item addressed.

TABLE 1: THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STAGES OF THE PERSONAL SELLING PROCESS

STAGE	OBJECTIVE
Prospecting	Search for a qualified prospect.
Preapproach	Gather information and decide on how to approach the prospect.
Approach	Gain the prospect's attention, stimulate interest and make a transition to the presentation
Presentation	This involves the conversion of a prospect into a customer by creating a desire for the product or service.
Close	Obtain a purchase commitment from the prospect and consequently make him a customer.
Follow-Up	Ensure that the customers are satisfied with the product or service.

Source:Eniola,V.O(2004).Principles Of Selling.

WHAT CUSTOMERS LIKE IN SALESPeOPLE

The customers like the following in salespeople;

1. He must be mannered. A salesperson must be polite, sincere and must be alert to the needs of the customers.
2. He must possess a skill for a good sales presentation. He must be clear, audible, concise and well prepared.
3. Time Awareness. He must keep appointments and also punctual. Punctuality they say is the sole of business i.e. He must be businesslike.
4. He must be knowledgeable about his product, company and customers.
5. He must be sensitive to needs. He must always listen to the customers and not trying to sell where there is no need.
6. A salesperson must be smart, fresh and clean in appearance. This must be in accordance to a particular working environment.

WHAT CUSTOMERS DISLIKE IN SALESPeOPLE

The customers dislike the following in sales people;

1. They dislike unpreparedness of the salespeople.
2. When a salesperson becomes arrogant, nosey, disrespectful and insincere.
3. Customers are not happy when salespeople don't keep appointments, irrelevant chat, talking too much or any other forms of time wastage.
4. They dislike untidiness in appearance and also strong breath from smoking.
5. Customers do not tolerate being pushy or aggressiveness on the part of the salespeople.
6. A salesperson integrity lies in the amount of knowledge or information he possesses. Therefore, a salesperson who does not know product details, availability, prices, terms etc. loses his integrity before a customer.

FIVE SECRETS TO INCREASE YOUR SALES

These include the following:

1. If the product you are selling is something your prospect can hold in his hands, get it into his hands as quickly as possible. Get the prospect into the act. Let him feel it, weight it, admire it.
2. Don't stand or sit alongside your prospect. Face him while you are pointing out the important advantages of your product. This will enable you to watch his facial expression and determine whether and when you should go for the hit.
3. Talk with prospects who won't talk with you. When you can get no feedback to your sales presentation, you must dramatise your presentation to get him involved.
4. Prospects who are themselves sales people and prospects who imagine they know a lot about selling sometimes present difficult selling obstacles, especially for the novice. Simply give your sales presentation. Then, wait a few seconds, just looking at him and waiting for him to say something. Then, start packing up your sales materials as if you are about to leave. He will quickly ask you, why?
5. Remember that in selling, 'time is money'. Therefore, you must allocate enough time to each prospect. Learn to quickly get your prospect interested in and wanting your product.

CONCLUSION

The nation's economy cannot be revamped without entrepreneurship. The actions of the entrepreneurs in an economy bring about selling and buying.

The people of this country cannot survive without the goods and services sold to them by the entrepreneurs. Therefore, entrepreneurial efforts in Nigeria must be intensified at all fronts in order to keep people alive and consequently avoid the dangers of hunger and starvation that could bring about the disintegration of our beloved country.

Nigeria must survive. Its survival lies in our people embracing the culture of entrepreneurship that will make things to be bought available thereby improving standard of living and also increasing life expectancy.

REFERENCES

Bassey Udo (2009): Nigeria's Export to Uk up by 436 Percent. NEXT Newspapers. Money on Page 30. Wednesday 9, September, 2009.

Eniola, V (2004).: Principles of Selling. Dee-Sage Nigeria Limited, Lagos.

Innocent Akhuemonkhan (2005): Enterprise and Enterprise Culture. Centre for Entrepreneurship Development, Yaba College of Technology,.

Nwathie Onyebuchi-Ibeya(2004): Five Secrets to Increase Your Sales. Entrepreneur. Daily Independent Small Business Series (019).

Email: financialgatewayweekly@yahoo.co.uk

Raheem Shefiu (2004): Lecture Notes on Selling. Rufus Giwa Polytechnic (Dimas Study Centre) Agege, Lagos, 2004.

Received for Publication: 01/10 /2010

Accepted for Publication: 10/11 /2010